Will's Wisdom: Your Opportunity To Bring A Little Prosperity To Impoverished Rural America

POSTED BY WILL HARRIS

NOV 20, 2019 8:41:11 AM

Every thinking American has some level of recognition of the decay that has occurred in our rural communities. Almost everyone can agree that this decline is one of the greatest economic disasters of the last half century.

Most Americans do not understand what caused this. I do,

because I was at its epicenter.

Let me tell you what happened, and how you can help to undo this tragedy.

Most rural communities enjoyed a fairly constant agrarian economy, prior to World War II. WWII was the Game Changer for American agriculture [**which I wrote about here**].

The Centralization of our food processing system, which began in the late 1940s, was of the greatest tragedies that resulted from this enormous transition. Farms ceased to be diverse biological systems, and instead became factories that produce great quantities of one commodity. Centralization of our food processing made rural American communities irrelevant.

This "food factory" production system needed a huge, centralized industrial processing system to keep up.

But the huge meat slaughter plants, soybean crushing plants, and grain mills that were built were not community-contributing businesses. They were, and are, owned and operated by large multinational companies.

- These plants were built in remote places, and immediately overloaded the labor pool. This caused illegal immigrants to be brought in to perform the low quality jobs that these plants offered.
- The large plants also dumped large quantities of effluent that quickly overwhelmed solid and liquid waste handling systems - polluting pristine environments.

Maybe the greatest harm of these mega-plants was that they operated with such great "economic efficiency" that they starved out our small Hometown, locally-owned and operated processing businesses. Wall Street, Silicon Valley, and foreign-owned food giants were enriched by siphoning off the income that had previously gone to multi-generational small town businesses.

When I was growing up in rural Georgia in the 1960s, every county had at least one family-owned abattoir [artisan slaughter plant]. Today, almost every single one is gone from our 159-county state.

This is our New Plan:

White Oak Pastures, with its 150 employees, is the largest privately-owned employer in our county. We write payroll checks for over $100,000 every Friday.

[Bluffton, population 103, is in Clay County. Clay County has a 41.4% poverty rate, and its unemployment is almost exactly twice the national average].

These funds pour into the economy of one of the poorest counties, in one of the poorest states in our country. And that is just payroll dollars - our farm and processing plants pour millions of dollars per year into our local economy.

- Look into where the beef, and pork, and lamb, and poultry, and other food that you feed your family comes from.
- Think about the production system that your food dollars are going to support. Do your part in making rural America relevant again.
- Remember that **even the USDA admits that the American farmer gets less that 15 cents of every food dollar that you spend**.

Spend your food dollars to vote on whatever system that you feel is best.

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Theresa Mitchell

11/20/2019, 1:23:01 PM

Thank you! Thank you all for what you do for your community and for our families by providing good, clean food! We will continue to support you. :)

Jenni Harris

11/21/2019, 8:59:48 AM

Thank you for reading and supporting, Theresa!

jimmy Davis

11/20/2019, 2:04:01 PM

Thank you for sharing. As we country boys say he hit the nail on the head. Also thank for your investment in your community and the impact it has in our region. Keep up the good work.

Jenni Harris

11/21/2019, 9:00:20 AM

Thanks, Jimmy! Come see us if you are ever in Southwest Georgia!

Dominic Elsworth

11/22/2019, 3:56:54 AM

I am farmer reading this from the UK. You could say exactly the same about UK agriculture. I hope the organisers of the Groundswell Conference can persuade Will Harris to come and speak. What you are doing is the model that we all should be

following.

David Risen

11/22/2019, 1:40:11 PM

Well done Will. You are the prime example of farmers doing good and healing this damaged home we call Earth. I recently moved to Denver from Tampa and I wonder if Will has considered speaking here. A lot of neat things happening in CO and I think we can all learn together.

Kathleen Harper

11/24/2019, 6:43:09 AM

I love everything about what you are doing and am sorry it took me so long to discover you! Is it too late to get a Thanksgiving Turkey?

Sara Doshier

11/24/2019, 7:11:34 AM

HI Kathleen, I sent you an email with details about our turkeys.

Andrew Bisek

11/29/2019, 6:07:32 AM

How much do you sell your turkeys for?

Jenni Harris

11/29/2019, 7:08:08 AM

Hi Andrew, We have a couple of different sizes. Give this page a look to see which one best suits you: https://www.whiteoakpastures.com/poultry/holiday-turkeys/

Elizabeth Scott

12/3/2019, 8:01:13 AM

Love your products. Your doing a great job.

Sara Baker

12/10/2019, 1:39:24 PM

And this is why I buy your products food, gifts etc. (I also purchase raw humanely raised diary as well). One of the most wonderful I read was the Thanksgiving "letter" stating the amount of money in bonuses you were to give your employees. So glad to be a part of this in my small way. Thank you so much for the work you do. May you continue to be blessed.

Jenni Harris

12/10/2019, 1:41:48 PM

Thank you, Sara.

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